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Title: Need to evolve a policy on deep sea fishing with a view to protect the interest of Indian fishermen.

PROF. M. RAMADASS (PONDICHERRY): Sir, India has vast fishery resources in the Indian Ocean and specially in deep-sea areas. Three decades ago, over 180 deep-sea trawlers were introduced for exploiting these fishery resources. It is now reported that only 60 vessels are operating at present. After the charter policy of 1981, 300 deep-sea trawlers were allowed to operate in our Exclusive Economic Zone. But, that policy was abandoned in 1998. It is unfortunate that no deep-sea fishing policy has been evolved till date. Using this opportunity some sections imported a few dozen deep-sea fishing vessels in the year 2000. Today about 150 vessels are fishing in Exclusive Economic Zone in the name of joint ventures. While Indian Joint Venture Partners get as usual a pittance from the foreign vessel operators, the country's fishery wealth is taken away from the country to feed the processing factories in other countries. The joint venture policy is dampening Indian deep-sea fishing industry. Therefore, it is requested that the Government may initiate steps to help the Indian deep sea trawlers to diversify. Further, it is requested to evolve a deep-sea fishing policy keeping in mind the interests of Indian fishermen.

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